

## CHAPTER VII.

### *THE WEST VIRGINIA CAMPAIGN.*

General Garnett Defeated.—De Lagnel's Adventure.—Loring's Operations.—General Lee takes Command.—The Cheat Mountain Ambush.—Its Failure.—Letter to Governor Letcher.—Movements on the Kanawha.—West Virginia Abandoned.—Description of Traveller.

BEFORE proceeding to describe the operations in North-western Virginia it will be necessary to glance at the condition of that section and the previous military operations that had been carried on within its limits. This section of Virginia did not cordially coincide in the ordinance of secession that had been passed by the State Convention, inasmuch as a considerable part of its inhabitants were opposed to secession, or, in other words, were Unionists. A large number, however, of its most influential citizens were ardent Southern supporters, and there was also an intermediate class, indifferent to politics, which was ready to join the party which might prove the strongest; besides, it soon became apparent that the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad was destined to exercise an important influence on military movements; therefore this section became an object of interest to both sides. At first, the Confederate colonel Porterfield was sent with a few companies to operate on the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad, but this force was too small and illy provided with the essentials for service, so that it could effect nothing. Shortly afterward General Robert Garnett was sent by the Confederate authorities to seize the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad and to confirm the North-western Virginians in their allegiance to the State. Garnett, with a force of about 5000 men, reached the railroad in June and occupied Laurel Hill. About the same time General McClellan crossed the Ohio into North-western Virginia with the view of gaining the adherence of its inhabitants to the Federal Government

and to protect the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad. Having a greatly superior force, he made it his first object to attack Garnett before that general could be reinforced (Colonel Pegram with a considerable detachment being defeated by General Rosecrans with a part of McClellan's force), and Garnett was obliged to retreat in order to save the rest of his little army. McClellan pursued, and, overtaking the rear-guard at Craddock's Ford, a skirmish ensued, in which Garnett was killed.

The adjutant-general, Captain Corley, assisted by other members of Garnett's staff, safely continued the retreat, and placed the remnant of the army where it could rest and recruit. An adventure may be related in connection with Garnett's defeat which exhibited great courage, endurance, and address. De Lagnel was an old army officer, and commanded the artillery of Pegram's detachment. When attacked by Rosecrans at Rich Mountain he fought his guns with great gallantry and effect; his men behaved well until the enemy began to close upon them; they then fled, leaving De Lagnel almost alone. Undaunted by the desertion of his men, he served a gun himself until disabled by a severe wound. Then, amid the confusion of a defeat, he escaped to a laurel-thicket near by, in which he concealed himself until the enemy had disappeared. He then found shelter under the roof of a friendly mountaineer. His kind host and hostess concealed and attended him until his wound was healed and his strength restored. He then determined to join the Confederate forces, which had again entered North-western Virginia, but to do so it was necessary to pass through the Federal lines. To accomplish this, he concluded to assume the character of a mountaineer, being supplied by his host with a herder's garb with the exception of shoes. Then, with a well-filled wallet over his shoulder and a staff in his hand, he bade adieu to his kind friends and launched forth into the mountains. After wandering among them for several days he fell in with the Federal pickets. On being questioned by them, he so well sustained the character he had assumed that all the pickets were easily passed until he reached the last outpost that separated him from his friends. Here he was more strictly examined than he had hitherto been, but by his

wit fully sustained the character he had adopted, and was told to continue his way; but just as he was about to depart one of the guards observed his boots, which, though soiled and worn, still exhibited signs of a fashionable make. Upon this the examination was renewed, and with all his ingenuity he could not escape detection; his boots had betrayed him. These traitors were drawn off, and in the leg of one the name of "De Lagnel" was found, and he was at once recognized as the officer whose disappearance at Rich Mountain had led to so much inquiry. He was sent a prisoner of war to the Federal headquarters, where he was courteously received. (It may be here remarked that General McClellan was always distinguished for courtesy and kindness to those whom the chances of war placed in his power.)

The defeat of General Garnett left McClellan in undisputed possession of all North-western Virginia. In order to secure his acquisition, he strongly occupied some of the principal mountain-passes and took other measures for its permanent occupation. A few days later the total defeat of McDowell at Bull Run considerably changed the order of things. McClellan was called to take the command of the Army of the Potomac, and the greater part of his force was withdrawn, leaving only a few thousand men to hold North-western Virginia. The result of McClellan's success in that quarter proved to be of much greater importance than was at first apprehended, by disheartening its loyal inhabitants and encouraging the doubtful or indifferent to give their adhesion to the Federal Government. The Confederate authorities, being aware of the importance of Western Virginia at that time both in a political and military point of view, determined to send there a force sufficiently strong to reoccupy and retain possession of it. There had been assembled in the neighborhood of Staunton five or six thousand men for the purpose of reinforcing General Garnett. These troops were ordered to advance on the 15th of July, under the command of General Henry R. Jackson, on the Parkersburg turnpike, to re-enter Western Virginia, and to occupy some convenient position until the remainder of the forces intended to operate in that quarter should arrive. Lor-

ing, whom we have seen assigned to the command of the Army of North-western Virginia, was an officer of considerable reputation. He had served with distinction in the Mexican War, had subsequently become colonel of a regiment of mounted rifles, and for several years prior to his resignation had commanded the department of New Mexico, where he acquired an experience in mountain-service. His appointment therefore gave general satisfaction. His staff was composed chiefly of experienced officers—Colonel Carter Stevens, adjutant-general; Major A. L. Long, chief of artillery; Captain Corley, chief quartermaster; Captain Cole, chief commissary; Lieutenant Matthews, aide-de-camp, and Colonel Starks, volunteer aide-de-camp—and as the country was full of enthusiasm on account of the recent victory at Manassas, he was about to enter upon his new field of operations under the most favorable auspices.

General Loring, accompanied by his staff, left Richmond on the 22d of July, the day after the battle of Manassas. On the 24th he arrived at Monterey, a small village about sixty miles west of Staunton, where he found Jackson, who informed him that on arriving at the Greenbrier River he had found Cheat Mountain Pass so strongly occupied by Federals that he deemed it unadvisable to attempt to carry it by a direct attack. So he retired, leaving Colonel Edward Johnston, with the Twelfth Georgia regiment and Anderson's battery, to occupy the Alleghany Mountain Pass, and, posting Rust's Arkansas regiment and Baldwin's Virginia regiment in convenient supporting distance of Johnston, he established himself at Monterey, with Fulkerson's and Scott's Virginia regiments, the First Georgia regiment (Colonel Ramsey's), Major Jackson's cavalry, and Shoemaker's battery. Having heard of a pass about forty miles west, near Huntersville, by which Cheat Mountain might be turned, he sent Colonel Gilliam with his own Virginia regiment and Colonel Lee's Sixth North Carolina regiment, being a force of about 2000 men, to occupy this pass, and had ordered the remaining troops intended for the Army of North-western Virginia to proceed direct from Staunton to Huntersville. This was the condition of affairs when General Loring arrived at Monterey and assumed command. He remained several days

in the neighborhood of Monterey, examining the condition of the troops and reconnoitering the position of the enemy on Cheat Mountain. Cheat Mountain Pass is a narrow gap near the top of the mountain whose natural strength had been greatly increased by the art of engineers since its occupation by the Federals. It was approachable from the east only by the Parkersburg turnpike, which, ascending the rugged side of the mountain, enters this narrow defile and winds its way through it for nearly a mile before it begins the western descent.

The Federals, finding this pass unoccupied, and foreseeing the importance the Parkersburg turnpike would be to the Confederates in their attempt to reoccupy West Virginia, seized it and fortified it, and now held it with a force of about 2500 men. The remainder of the Federal force was in the vicinity of Beverly, a village a few miles west of Cheat River. General Loring, having satisfied himself that a direct attack on Cheat Mountain Pass was impracticable, and that there was no force of the enemy near the west base of Cheat Mountain except that of Beverly, determined to take command of the force which had been ordered to rendezvous at Huntersville and advance by the pass that Colonel Gilliam had been directed to occupy to the rear of the enemy's position on Cheat Mountain. He therefore directed Jackson to advance his whole force, which at this time amounted to 6000 men, to the Greenbrier River, and hold himself in readiness to co-operate when the advance was made from Huntersville, and then proceeded to that place to make arrangements for the proposed movement. When Loring arrived at Huntersville, about the 1st of August, he found already there Maney's, Hatten's, and Savage's Tennessee regiments, Campbell's Virginia regiment, a battalion of Virginia regulars, 400 strong, commanded by Colonel Munford, Major W. H. F. Lee's squadron of cavalry, and Marye's and Stanley's batteries of artillery. Colonel Gilliam was at Valley Mountain Pass, fifteen miles west of Huntersville, with two regiments, and two other regiments, Burke's Virginia and a Georgia regiment, were *en route* from Staunton. The force of Loring on the Huntersville line

amounted in round numbers to 8500 effective men. The general's staff were particularly active in their efforts to prepare for a speedy advance. Colonel Stevenson, adjutant-general, and Captains Corley and Cole, chief quartermaster and commissary, being experienced officers, rendered valuable service in organizing the troops and in collecting transportation and supplies. Major A. L. Long, in addition to his duties as chief of artillery, had assigned him those of inspector-general. The troops were well armed and equipped, all of them were accustomed to the use of arms, and many were expert marksmen, and a large proportion had received military instruction in the various volunteer companies of which they had been members. The troops were in fine spirits, and desired nothing more than to be led against the enemy. It was obvious to all those about the general that the success of the proposed movement depended upon its speedy execution. It was impossible that the occupation of Valley Mountain by a force as large as that of Gilliam could escape the observation of the Federals, and its position would expose the design of the Confederates. Delay would enable the Federals to seize all the important passes on the route, and fortify them so strongly that they would effectually arrest the advance of any force. Yet, notwithstanding the great value of time in the execution of the movement contemplated by General Loring, he seemed to regard the formation of a dépôt of supplies at Huntersville and the organization of a supply-train as a matter of first importance. He appeared to overlook the fact that the line from Huntersville to Beverly, only forty miles long, was to be only temporary—for so soon as Cheat Mountain Pass was opened he would withdraw his supplies from Staunton over the Parkersburg turnpike—and also that the country along his line abounded in beef and grain.

While Loring is preparing to advance we will take a view of affairs in other quarters. After the withdrawal of McClellan, General Rosecrans was assigned to the command of the department of Western Virginia. At the same time a large portion of the troops in that department were withdrawn for the defence of the capital. The Federal force in Western Virginia at the

time Loring assumed command of the Army of North-western Virginia was only about six or seven thousand men, about half of which, under the command of General Reynolds, occupied the Cheat Mountain Pass. The other portion, commanded by General Cox, was designed for operations on the line of the Kanawha. General Rosecrans was one of the most energetic and skilful of the Federal commanders. As soon as he found himself in command of the department of Western Virginia he set about increasing his force and strengthening his position. Taking advantage of the political disaffection among the Western Virginians, he obtained many recruits, which, with recruits from other quarters, rapidly increased his force. The Confederate authorities in the mean time, being informed of the advance of General Cox to the Kanawha, sent a force of about 5000 men to oppose him under the command of General Wise, and appointed General Robert E. Lee to the command of the department of Western Virginia. He had displayed such remarkable administrative ability in the organization of the Virginia troops that he was retained at the head of the Confederate military bureau till the time of his appointment to the command of this department. Although aware of the difficulties to be met with in a mountainous country like Western Virginia, he unflinchingly accepted this new command, and entered upon his arduous task with no other feelings than those for the good of his country. When Lee arrived at Huntersville, he found General Loring busily engaged in forming his *dépôt* of supplies and organizing his transportation-train. Several days had already elapsed, and several days more would be necessary before he could complete his preparations for an advance. The arrival of Lee at Huntersville as commander of the department took Loring by surprise. Having been his superior in rank in the old army, he could not suppress a feeling of jealousy. Lee was accompanied by his aides-de-camp, Colonel John A. Washington and Captain Walter H. Taylor. After remaining several days at Huntersville without gaining any positive information from Loring in regard to the time of his probable advance, he proceeded to join Colonel Gilliam at Valley Mountain. He took with him Major Lee's cavalry, not as an escort,

but for the purpose of scouting and reconnoitering. It had now been eight or ten days since Gilliam had first arrived at Valley Mountain Pass. At that time he learned from the inhabitants and his scouts that the road to Beverly was unoccupied. But within the last day or two a force of the Federals had advanced within less than a mile of his front, and then retired. Lee at once busied himself about gaining information respecting the position of the enemy. He soon learned that the Federals had taken possession of a strong pass ten miles in front of Valley Mountain, and were actively engaged in fortifying it. When Loring arrived, about the 12th of August, the Federals had been reinforced, and this position had been so greatly strengthened that General Lee deemed it unadvisable to attempt a direct attack, so the only course now to be pursued was to gain the Federal flank or rear.

General Lee, as we already know, had been distinguished in the Mexican War as a reconnoitering officer, and Scott had been mainly indebted to his bold reconnoissances for the brilliant success of his Mexican campaigns. Rank and age had not impaired the qualities that had formerly rendered him so distinguished. He brought them with him to the mountains of Virginia. There was not a day when it was possible for him to be out that the general, with either Colonel Washington or Captain Taylor, might not be seen crossing the mountains, climbing over rocks and crags, to get a view of the Federal position. Ever mindful of the safety of his men, he would never spare himself toil or fatigue when seeking the means to prevent unnecessary loss of life. By way of illustrating his boldness as a reconnoitering officer, an anecdote may be related as told by Captain Preston, adjutant of the Forty-eighth Virginia regiment (Colonel Campbell's). The regiment being on picket, he, seeing three men on an elevated point about half a mile in advance of the line of pickets, and believing them to be Federals, asked his colonel to let him capture them. Permission being obtained, he selected two men from a number of volunteers who had offered to accompany him, and set forth to capture the Federal scouts. Dashing through the brushwood and over the rocks, he suddenly burst upon the unsuspecting



trio, when lo! to his amazement, General Lee stood before him!

To add to the difficulties of a campaign in the mountains, the rainy season set in: it began to rain about the middle of August, and continued to do so without much cessation for six weeks; in the mean time, the narrow mountain-roads became saturated and softened, so that the passage of heavy trains of wagons soon rendered them almost impassable: while the wet weather lasted any movement was simply impossible. The troops, being new and unaccustomed to camp-life, began to suffer from all the camp-diseases. Typhoid fever, measles, and home-sickness began to spread among them, so that in the course of a few weeks nearly one-third of the army was rendered *hors de combat* by sickness. Amid this accumulation of difficulties Lee preserved his equanimity and cheerfulness; his chief aim now was to ameliorate as much as possible the sufferings of his men. During this period of inactivity he exerted himself to find a practicable route leading to the rear of Cheat Mountain Pass, the route by which Loring had proposed to reach it being now effectually closed. The possession of the pass was of great importance to the Confederates, as the Parkersburg turnpike was the principal line over which operations could be successfully carried on in Northwestern Virginia. Individual scouts were employed, both from among the well-affected inhabitants and the enterprising young soldiers of the army: Lieutenant Lewis Randolph, of the Virginia State regulars, was particularly distinguished for the boldness of his reconnoissances. Early in September, General Jackson reported to Loring that Colonel Rust, Third Arkansas regiment, had made a reconnoissance to the rear of Cheat Mountain Pass, and had discovered a route, though difficult, by which infantry could be led. Soon after Colonel Rust reported in person, and informed General Lee of the practicability of reaching the rear of the enemy's position on Cheat Mountain, from which a favorable attack could be made, and requested the general, in case his information was favorably considered, to permit him to lead the attacking column, to consist of his regiment and such other troops as the general

might designate. Another route was in the mean time discovered, leading along the western side of Cheat Mountain, by which troops could be conducted to a point on the Parkersburg turnpike about two miles below the Federal position in the pass. This being the information that General Lee had been most desirous of obtaining, he determined to attack the enemy without further delay. The opposing forces were at this time about equal in numbers. Loring's force was now 6000, Jackson's about 5000 strong. Reynolds's force had been increased to about 11,000 men; of these, 2000 were on Cheat Mountain, and about 5000 in position on the Lewisburg road in front of Loring. The remainder of Reynolds's force was held in reserve near the junction of the Parkersburg turnpike and the Lewisburg road.

Lee determined to attack on the morning of the 12th of September. The plan was that Colonel Rust should gain the rear of the Federal position by early dawn and begin the attack. General Anderson, with two Tennessee regiments from Loring's command, was to support him, while Jackson was to make a diversion in front. Cheat Mountain Pass being carried, Jackson with his whole force was to sweep down the mountain and fall upon the rear of the other Federal position; General Donaldson with two regiments was to gain a favorable position for attacking the enemy on the Lewisburg road in flank or rear; and Loring was to advance by the main road on the Federal front. In case of failure Anderson and Donaldson were to rejoin Loring, and Rust was to find his way back to Jackson. The troops gained their designated positions with remarkable promptness and accuracy in point of time, considering the distance and the difficulties to be overcome. Colonel Rust's attack on Cheat Mountain was to be the signal for the general advance of all the troops. It was anxiously expected from early dawn throughout the day. On every side was continuously heard, "What has become of Rust?" "Why don't he attack?" "Rust must have lost his way." The Tennesseans under Anderson became so impatient that they requested to be led to the attack without waiting for Rust, but Anderson thought that he must be governed by the letter of

his instructions and declined granting the request of his men. Thus we see a plan that offered every prospect of success come to naught by the failure of a subordinate officer to equal the expectations of his commander. Anderson and Donaldson, finding that their situation was becoming critical, being liable to discovery and being between two superior forces, rejoined Loring on the 13th. On the same day Colonel Rust reported in person his operations, which amounted to this: He had heard nothing of Anderson; he passed the day watching the Federals, who were in a state of unconscious security, and then retired, his presence not having been suspected. When Rust rendered his report, General Lee, perceiving the deep mortification he felt at the great blunder he had committed, permitted him to rejoin his regiment. A council of war was then held, in which it was decided that the position of the Federals was too strong to be attacked in front with any reasonable prospect of success, and that a flank attack was now out of the question, inasmuch as the Federals had been aroused by the discovery of the danger which had so recently threatened them. The troops were therefore ordered to resume their former positions. During the operations just related there had been but little skirmishing, and the Confederate loss had been slight. One circumstance, however, occurred which cast a gloom over the whole army. Colonel J. A. Washington while making a reconnoissance fell into an ambuscade and was killed. He had by his soldierly qualities and high gentlemanly bearing gained the esteem of all. Too much praise cannot be bestowed upon the troops for their courage and patient endurance in this campaign, and Colonels Burke, Gilliam, Campbell, Lee, Munford, Maney, Hatten, and Savage were worthy of the gallant fellows that it had fallen to their lot to command.

The failure of this well-devised operation was due to one of those errors of judgment to which all warlike movements are liable, and through which many a neatly-laid scheme has come to naught. The system of operations had been clearly defined in General Loring's order of September 8th, but the unavoidable difficulty in producing concert of action between

divided troops, and the hesitation of each commander to act on his own responsibility, stood in the way of success, and caused an inglorious withdrawal of the ambushed forces, from whom such a very different result was reasonably expected.

In this connection may be given General Lee's stirring appeal to the patriotism of the troops, issued at the same time with General Loring's special order to the commanders of the columns of attack:

"HEADQUARTERS, VALLEY MOUNTAIN,

"September 8, 1861.

"The forward movement announced to the Army of the North-west in Special Order No. 28, from its headquarters, of this date, gives the general commanding the opportunity of exhorting the troops to keep steadily in view the great principles for which they contend, and to manifest to the world their determination to maintain them. The eyes of the country are upon you. The safety of your homes and the lives of all you hold dear depend upon your courage and exertions. Let each man resolve to be victorious, and that the right of self-government, liberty, and peace shall in him find a defender. The progress of this army must be forward.

"R. E. LEE,

"*General commanding.*"

We here append a letter from General Lee to Governor Letcher bearing upon this campaign, which has been so variously criticised and generally misunderstood:

"VALLEY MOUNTAIN, Sept. 17, 1861.

"MY DEAR GOVERNOR: I received your very kind note of the 5th inst. just as I was about to accompany General Loring's command on an expedition to the enemy's works in front, or I would have before thanked you for the interest you take in my welfare and your too flattering expressions of my ability. Indeed, you overrate me much, and I feel humbled when I weigh myself by your standard. I am, however, very grateful for your confidence, and I can answer for my sin-

cerity in the earnest endeavor I make to advance the cause I have so much at heart, though conscious of the slow progress I make.

"I was very sanguine of taking the enemy's works on last Thursday morning. I had considered the subject well. With great effort the troops intended for the surprise had reached their destination, having traversed twenty miles of steep, rugged mountain-paths, and the last day through a terrible storm, which lasted all night, and in which they had to stand drenched to the skin in the cold rain. Still, their spirits were good. When morning broke I could see the enemy's tents on Valley River at the point on the Huttonsville road just below me. It was a tempting sight. We waited for the attack on Cheat Mountain, which was to be the signal, till 10 A.M.; the men were cleaning their unserviceable arms. But the signal did not come. All chance for surprise was gone. The provisions of the men had been destroyed the preceding day by the storm. They had nothing to eat that morning, could not hold out another day, and were obliged to be withdrawn. The party sent to Cheat Mountain to take that in the rear had also to be withdrawn. The attack to come off from the east side failed from the difficulties in the way; the opportunity was lost and our plan discovered.

"It is a grievous disappointment to me, I assure you. But for the rain-storm I have no doubt it would have succeeded. This, governor, is for your own eye. Please do not speak of it; we must try again. Our greatest loss is the death of my dear friend Colonel Washington. He and my son were reconnoitering the front of the enemy. They came unawares upon a concealed party, who fired upon them within twenty yards, and the colonel fell pierced by three balls. My son's horse received three shots, but he escaped on the colonel's horse. His zeal for the cause to which he had devoted himself carried him, I fear, too far.

"We took some seventy prisoners and killed some twenty-five or thirty of the enemy. Our loss was small besides what I have mentioned. Our greatest difficulty is the roads. It has been raining in these mountains about six weeks. It is impos-

sible to get along. It is that which has paralyzed all our efforts.

"With sincere thanks for your good wishes,

"I am very truly yours,

"R. E. LEE.

"His Excellency Gov. JOHN LETCHER."

We will now examine into the condition of affairs on the line of the Kanawha. ✓

General Wise entered the Kanawha Valley in August. General Cox was then near Charleston. After some manœuvring, Wise fell back to the junction of the New River and the Gauley, where he was joined by General Floyd, whose force now numbered between eight and ten thousand men. Being uncertain whether Cox would advance up the New River line or upon that of the Gauley, he posted a force under Wise on the New River line, while he occupied a favorable position on the Gauley. At Carnifex Ferry, Floyd and Wise were in easy supporting distance of each other, but there was no cordiality between them. About the 15th of September, General Floyd, seeing that it was the evident intention of Rosecrans to attack him, ordered Wise to his support; which order Wise failed to obey, and Floyd was left to receive alone the attack of a greatly superior force, which, however, he succeeded in repulsing with considerable loss, but, being still unsupported by Wise, he was obliged to retire. Among the casualties on the side of the Confederates, Floyd had received a painful wound in the arm. Wise having finally joined Floyd, they fell back to a position on the James River and Kanawha turnpike, near the Hawk's Nest.

About the last of September, General Rosecrans, having reinforced Cox, took command in person and advanced on the James River and Kanawha turnpike, gradually pushing back Floyd and Wise in the direction of Lewisburg, it being his intention to turn the Confederate position on Valley Mountain and the Greenbrier River. Such was the condition of affairs on the line of the Kanawha at the close of the Valley Mountain campaign. Lee, perceiving that the operations on the Kanawha

were not progressing favorably, determined to take control of affairs in that quarter himself. He therefore directed Loring to detach Gilliam with his own regiment (the battalion of State regulars) and a section of artillery to occupy Valley Mountain Pass, and proceeded with the remainder of his force to reinforce General Floyd. General Lee arrived at Meadow Bluff about the 7th of October, where he found Floyd. Meadow Bluff is a small village near the eastern base of Sewell Mountain. Floyd had proposed making a stand there, but Wise had halted on the top of the mountain, five miles in rear, where he had determined to fight. The hostility that had previously existed between the two generals had not been diminished by the affair of Carnifex Ferry; the arrival of General Lee was therefore fortunate, as it most probably prevented a disaster, since Rosecrans was advancing, and would have been able to strike both Wise and Floyd in detail. Lee found Wise occupying the eastern crest of Sewell Mountain. Being satisfied with the position, he determined to hold it and give battle to Rosecrans if he persisted in advancing. So he ordered Floyd to return and support Wise. Lee had barely time to complete his arrangements when Rosecrans appeared on the opposite crest.

Each army now occupied a mountain-crest nearly parallel, separated by a gap or depression forming a notch in the mountain about a mile wide, over which it was difficult to pass except by the James River and Kanawha turnpike, which crosses it. Both positions were naturally very strong. The Confederate force being greatly inferior to that of the Federals, and Rosecrans having assumed the offensive, Lee naturally expected to be attacked before Loring could come up; he therefore actively employed his skill as an engineer in adding to the natural strength of his position. Rosecrans, discovering the formidable preparations of the Confederates, prudently forbore to attack them. The arrival of Loring on the 9th placed General Lee's force almost on an equality with that of the Federals.

The force of Lee now amounted to about 15,000 men. The troops were in fine spirits and anxious to be led to the attack, but the general, ever mindful of the safety of his men, restrained their ardor. On one occasion, when several of his

commanders were urging an attack, he remarked: "I know, gentlemen, you could carry the enemy's lines, but we cannot spare the brave men who would lose their lives in doing it. If Rosecrans does not attack us, we will find a way to reach him that will not cost us so dearly." After waiting several days for General Rosecrans to attack, he began to make preparations for a flank movement to gain Rosecrans's rear, who no longer manifested a disposition to continue the aggressive. Floyd and others who had a good knowledge of the routes in the vicinity of Sewell Mountain reported to Lee a practicable route for artillery and infantry leading about ten miles to the rear of the Federal position. Upon this information he conceived the plan of sending a column of 5000 men by this route at night, to fall at dawn upon the Federals' rear, while a strong demonstration was being made in front. Had this plan been executed, it would most likely have been successful, but Rosecrans escaped the trap by a night retreat. Great was the disappointment of the troops when they discovered that the Federals had retired and the prospect of a battle had vanished.

As soon as the retreat of the Federals was discovered pursuit was ordered, but Lee soon perceived that it would be impossible to overtake Rosecrans and bring him to a successful engagement in the rough, mountainous country through which he was retreating; and, not wishing to harass his troops unnecessarily, he ordered them to return to their several positions, and Rosecrans was allowed to pursue his retreat unmolested to the Kanawha Valley. Lee knew that with the bravery of his troops and the strength of his position he could repel any attack that the Federals could make, while, on the other hand, if he attacked them in their position the result, even if successful, would be attended with great loss. He therefore determined to give Rosecrans every opportunity to attack before taking the offensive himself, which, as we have seen, Rosecrans prevented by abandoning his own plans and retreating.

The season was now so far advanced that it was impossible to continue active operations in Western Virginia. Snow had already fallen and the roads had become almost impassable.



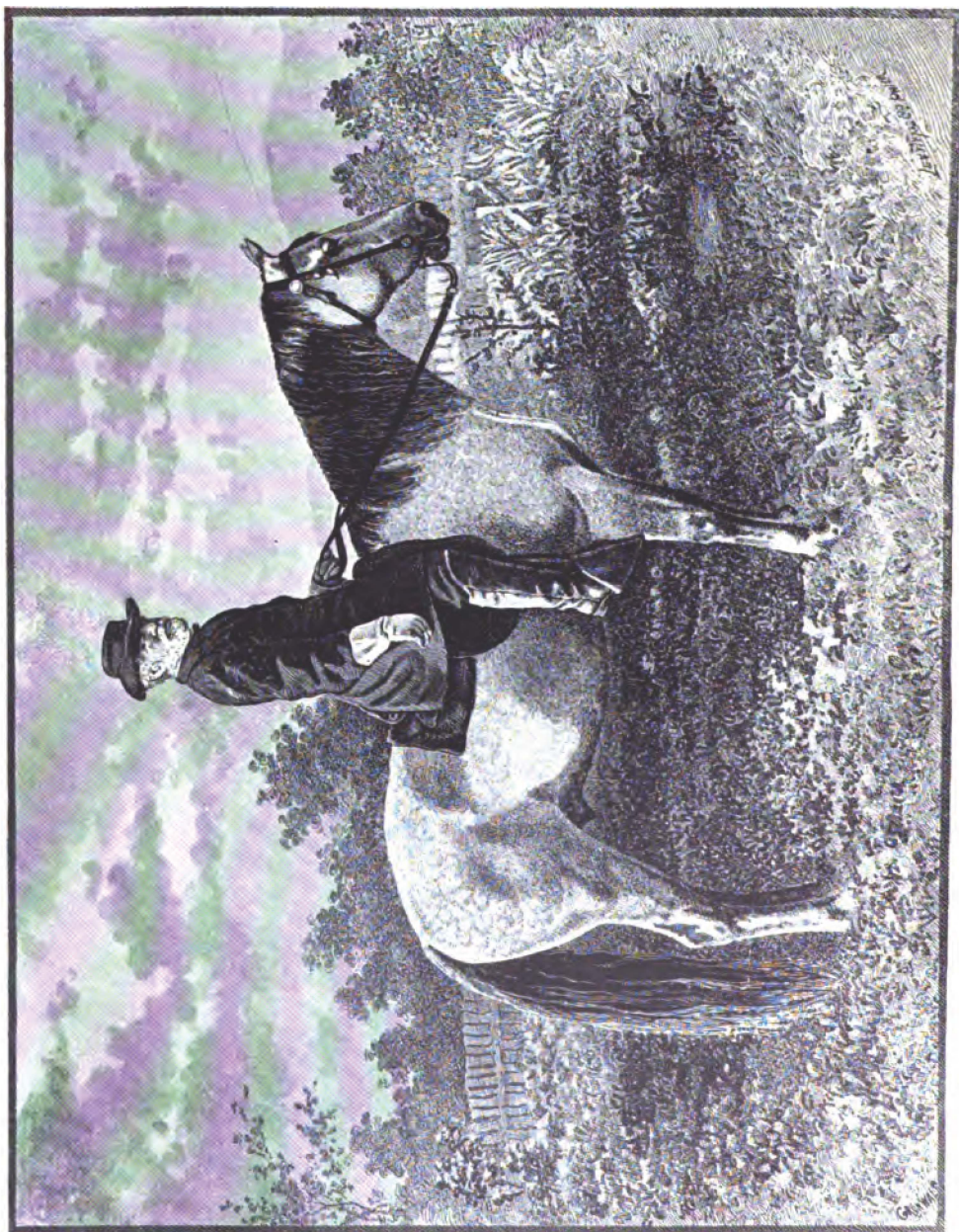
Lee therefore deemed it necessary to withdraw the troops from Sewell Mountain. About the 1st of November the different columns were sent to their various destinations.

The campaign had been pronounced a failure. The press and the public were clamorous against him. No one stopped to inquire the cause or examine into the difficulties that surrounded him. Upon him alone were heaped the impracticability of mountains, the hostility of the elements, and the want of harmony of subordinate commanders. The difficulties to be encountered in Western Virginia were so great and the chances of success so doubtful that the Confederate authorities abandoned the idea of its further occupation. Therefore the greater part of the troops that had been serving in Western Virginia were ordered where their services would be more available, and Lee was assigned to the command of the department of South Carolina, Georgia, and Florida.

While the operations on Big Sewell were in progress Reynolds made a descent from Cheat Mountain and attacked the Confederate position on the Greenbrier. This attack was promptly met by General H. R. Jackson, and repulsed with considerable loss. Soon after his return to Huntersville, General Loring was instructed to report to General T. J. Jackson (Stonewall Jackson), then commanding in the Shenandoah Valley, to participate in a contemplated winter campaign. About the same time Major Long received orders from the War Office to report to General Lee in the department of South Carolina, Georgia, and Florida.

The inactivity of the forces on the Potomac that succeeded the battle of Manassas had a powerful influence on the campaign in Western Virginia, as it permitted the Federals to collect a force sufficiently powerful to render insurmountable difficulties which, under the most favorable circumstances, were exceedingly embarrassing. Had the Confederates made an advance across the Potomac and boldly threatened Washington in August or September, the nervous fear which then possessed the Federal authorities for the safety of that city would have caused them to draw forces from all quarters to defend their capital. The pressure on Lee in Western Virginia would have





GENERAL LEE ON HIS HORSE, TRAVELLER.

thus been relieved, and it is within the scope of military probability that he would have regained all that had been lost in that section, and have taken measures for its future preservation and the permanent occupation of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad, which became of such immense importance to the Federal Government as the connecting-link between the Western States and the Eastern theatre of war.

In connection with this West Virginia campaign we may revert to another matter of considerable interest, that relating to Lee's favorite horse "Traveller," a noble animal which attained almost as much celebrity in the Army of Northern Virginia as the gallant form which he bore through so many fields of battle. He was purchased during this campaign, and served his master royally throughout the whole duration of the war and for many years afterward. We are fortunately able to give a history and description of this celebrated charger from Lee himself. It was dictated to his daughter Agnes, with corrections in his own handwriting, apparently in response to some artist who had asked for a description of the animal. The enthusiasm with which the general speaks of his companion of so many days of peril and hardship shows the spirit of a true horseman and a nature capable of kindly affection and companionship for every creature with which he came into intimate relations:

"If I was an artist like you, I would draw a true picture of 'Traveller,' representing his fine proportions, muscular figure, deep chest and short back, strong haunches, flat legs, small head, broad forehead, delicate ears, quick eye, small feet, and black mane and tail. Such a picture would inspire a poet, whose genius could then depict his worth and describe his endurance of toil, hunger, thirst, heat, cold, and the dangers and suffering through which he has passed. He could dilate upon his sagacity and affection and his invariable response to every wish of his rider. He might even imagine his thoughts through the long night-marches and days of battle through which he has passed. But I am no artist, and can only say he is a *Confederate gray*. I purchased him in the mountains of Virginia in the autumn of 1861, and he has been my patient follower ever since

—to Georgia, the Carolinas, and back to Virginia. He carried me through the seven days' battle around Richmond, the Second Manassas, at Sharpsburg, Fredericksburg, the last day at Chancellorsville, to Pennsylvania, at Gettysburg, and back to the Rappahannock. From the commencement of the campaign in 1864 at Orange till its close around Petersburg the saddle was scarcely off his back, as he passed through the fire of the Wilderness, Spottsylvania, Cold Harbor, and across the James River. He was almost in daily requisition in the winter of 1864-65 on the long line of defences from the Chickahominy north of Richmond and Hatcher's Run south of the Appomattox. In the campaign of 1865 he bore me from Petersburg to the final days at Appomattox Court-house.

"You must know the comfort he is to me in my present retirement. He is well supplied with equipments. Two sets have been sent to him from England, one from the ladies of Baltimore, and one was made for him in Richmond; but I think his favorite is the American saddle from St. Louis.\* Of all his companions in toil, 'Richmond,' 'Brown Roan,' 'Ajax,' and quiet 'Lucy Long,' he is the only one that retained his vigor to the last.† The first two expired under their onerous burden, and the last two failed. You can, I am sure, from what I have said, paint his portrait."

To General Lee's description of his noble horse may be added some few further particulars of his appearance and history. He was sixteen hands high, of a dark iron-gray color, and when purchased about five years old. He was strong and active, but perfectly docile, and as calm as his master under fire. General Lee had always a strong affection for him, which he manifested

\* This saddle has its story, which is worth relating. When Colonel Lee resigned from the United States army and repaired to Richmond to offer his services to his native State, his baggage, which had just reached New York, was seized by the authorities. Among his effects was a saddle of peculiar form which he preferred to all others. He immediately wrote to St. Louis, to the maker, desiring to have another like it if he was willing to take the risk of receiving his pay. The saddle was at once sent, and the soldier did not let the busy occupation of war make him forget to send the full price to the maker through a safe channel. He rode this saddle all through the war and throughout his after-life.

† The horse ridden by Lee in the Mexican War was named "Grace Darling."

on many occasions. Six years after the war "Traveller" had become almost milk-white, having grown hoary with age and honors. He died very soon after the decease of his master, his death arising from lockjaw caused by his treading on a nail which penetrated his foot and could not be withdrawn.

## CHAPTER VIII.

### *THE SOUTH COAST DEFENCES.*

General Lee in Charleston.—A Great Conflagration.—Topography of the Coast.—Its Defences.—General Lee's Engineering Operations.—His Mode of Life.—Ordered back to Richmond.

HAVING received orders to report to General Lee on the South Atlantic coast, the writer arrived in Charleston on the eve of the great fire that laid half of that beautiful city in ruins. The fire-alarm was heard by him on his way to the Mills House, but as fires are of frequent occurrence in cities, he gave little heed to it, as the conflagration seemed small and at a great distance from the hotel. General Lee had arrived a little before from his headquarters at Coosawhatchie. Soon after the arrival of Major Long he reported to Lee, who was in the hotel-parlor with Captains Taylor and Ives and some others. After a short conversation all separated for the night, little thinking that they would soon be compelled to seek safety in flight. Before retiring they observed that the fire had increased in volume, but it was not yet of sufficient magnitude to cause uneasiness. About eleven o'clock the general had Major Long called, who found him viewing the fire from the parlor window. To their amazement, it had acquired the proportions of a conflagration enveloping a quarter of the city. General Lee remarked that as the fire seemed beyond control and was advancing toward the hotel, it would be necessary to prepare to leave at a moment's notice. Mrs. Long was informed how matters stood, and in a few minutes was ready and repaired to the parlor, where she found Mrs. Washington, the wife of Captain Washington of General Lee's staff. By this time many of the guests of the hotel had assembled in the parlor, commenting anxiously on the terrible prospect. In order to get a better view of the desolating scene, General Lee, Major Long,



and some others assembled on the roof of the hotel, which towered far above the adjacent houses. From this position a scene of awful sublimity met the eye: more than one-third of the city appeared a sea of fire, shooting up columns of flame that seemed to mingle with the stars. From King street eastward to the river, extending back more than a mile, stores and dwellings, churches and public buildings, were enveloped in one common blaze, which was marching steadily and rapidly across the city. The mind was held fascinated by the fierce rage of the devouring element, until the thought was turned upon the helpless victims that crowded the streets as far as the eye could reach bending beneath the household goods that had been rescued from destruction, and struggling with might and main to gain a place of safety. Wagons, carts, and all kinds of vehicles loaded with every conceivable article were pressing women and children in dense masses to the sidewalks, and sometimes the combustible articles with which the carts and wagons were loaded became ignited by the sparks that swept from time to time along the streets, thus increasing the confusion that reigned among the bewildered multitude. Turning from the human misery below to the increasing fury of the conflagration, the question arose, Why has the demon of destruction been permitted to rage an unopposed destroyer of the Queen City of the South Atlantic, transforming her matchless beauty to hideous ruin? The reservoir, which was supplied by the water of the bay, had been drained by the receding tide, and the fire companies had been depleted by the demands of war; consequently, the city became a helpless victim.

The fire had by twelve o'clock reached the immediate vicinity of the hotel, and the flames were lapping themselves about the opposite houses. Just as the party was about to descend from its post of observation a body of soldiers appeared, headed by General Ripley (these were the troops brought by their gallant leader from Sullivan's Island to rescue the city). Now the flames were about to meet their first real opposition, and the hotel, whose huge bulk covered an important district, claimed especial attention. On returning to the parlor the ladies were found with bundles and babies ready to decamp.



It was indeed time to move, for the hotel had become a scene of great confusion, and the heat from without was oppressive, while the only remaining chance of escape was by a back stairway through the cellar. General Lee took one baby in his arms and Major Long took another, they being preceded by a guide with a lantern to light the way. Mrs. Long and Mrs. Washington, accompanied by Taylor and Ives, brought up the rear. On emerging from the cellar the group were met by the glare and heat of the burning buildings on the opposite side of the street. An omnibus was a few yards distant, into which all hurried, and were driven off amid a shower of sparks and cinders to the house of Mr. Alston on the Battery, which, in the absence of the family, was kindly put at General Lee's disposal by young Mr. Alston, who had remained in the city. The fire was subdued during the night, and the morning revealed a hideous ruin extending from the Ashley to the Cooper River, and bearing fearful testimony to the magnitude of the conflagration. The hotel was saved, and after order was restored its comfortable quarters were resumed. But the scene without was entirely changed: the superb edifices of the previous day had been converted into smoking beams and tottering walls, and the happy people of the day before were mournful spectators of the desolation that surrounded them. In this impressive manner Major Long was introduced to a companionship with General Lee which was destined to last throughout the war.

The defences of the coast, embracing numerous vital points, chiefly occupied General Lee's attention during his period of service in this southern department. The character of the work to be done and the method in which he performed it here call for description.

The line of coast extending from the entrance of Chesapeake Bay to the mouth of the Rio Grande presents innumerable bays, inlets, and harbors, into which vessels could run either for predatory incursions or with the intention of actual invasion. The Federals having the command of the sea, it was certain that they would take advantage of this open condition of the coast to employ their naval force as soon as it could be

collected, not only to enforce the blockade which had been declared, but also for making inroads along our unprotected ocean border. That the system of defence adopted may be understood it is necessary to describe a little in detail the topography of the coast.

On the coast of North Carolina are Albemarle and Pamlico Sounds, penetrating far into the interior. Farther south, Cape Fear River connects with the ocean by two channels, the south-west channel being then defended by a small enclosed fort and a water battery. On the coast of South Carolina are Georgetown and Charleston harbors. A succession of islands extends along the coast of South Carolina and Georgia, separated from the main land by a channel which is navigable for vessels of moderate draught from Charleston to Fernandina, Florida. There are fewer assailable points on the Gulf than on the Atlantic. Pensacola, Mobile, and the mouths of the Mississippi were defended by works that had hitherto been regarded as sufficiently strong to repulse any naval attack that might be made upon them. Immediately after the bombardment and capture of Fort Sumter the work of seacoast defence was begun, and carried forward as rapidly as the limited means of the Confederacy would permit. Roanoke Island and other points on Albemarle and Pamlico Sounds were fortified. Batteries were established at the south-east entrance of Cape Fear River, and the works on the south-west entrance of that river were strengthened. Defences were constructed at Georgetown and at all assailable points on the north-east coast of South Carolina. The works of Charleston harbor were greatly strengthened by earthworks and floating batteries. The defences from Charleston down the coast of South Carolina and Georgia were confined chiefly to the islands and salient points bearing upon the channels leading inland. Defensive works were erected at all important points along the coast. Many of the defences, being injudiciously located and hastily erected, offered but little resistance to the enemy when attacked. These defects were not surprising when we take into consideration the inexperience of the engineers and the long line of seacoast to be defended. As soon as a sufficient naval force had been collected by the

Federals, an expedition under the command of General Butler was sent to the coast of North Carolina, and captured several important points. A second expedition, under Admiral Dupont and General T. W. Sherman, was sent to make a descent on the coast of South Carolina. On the 27th of November, Dupont attacked the batteries that were designed to defend Port Royal harbor, and almost without resistance carried them and gained possession of Port Royal. This is the best harbor in South Carolina, and is the strategic key to all the South Atlantic coast. Later, Burnside captured Roanoke Island and established himself in Eastern North Carolina without resistance. The rapid fall of Roanoke Island and Port Royal struck consternation into the hearts of the inhabitants along the entire coast. The capture of Port Royal gave the Federals the entire possession of Beaufort Island, which afforded a secure place of arms for the troops, while the harbor gave a safe anchorage for the fleet. Beaufort Island almost fills a deep indenture in the main shore, from which it is separated for the greater part of its extent by a narrow channel which is navigable throughout. Its northern extremity extends to within a few miles of the Charleston and Savannah Railroad. The main road from Port Royal to Pocotaligo crosses the channel at this point. The evacuation of Hilton Head, on the south-western extremity of Beaufort Island, followed the capture of Port Royal. This exposed Savannah, only about twenty-five miles distant, to an attack from that direction. At the same time, the Federals having command of Helena Bay, Charleston was liable to be assailed from North Edisto or Stono Inlet, and the railroad could have been reached without opposition by the road from Port Royal to Pocotaligo.

Such was the state of affairs when General Lee reached Charleston, in the early part of November, 1861, to assume the command of the department of South Carolina, Georgia, and Florida. His vigorous mind at once comprehended the essential features of the situation, and with his accustomed energy he prepared to overcome the many difficulties that presented themselves. Directing fortifications to be constructed on the Stono, the Edisto, and the Combahee, he fixed his head-

quarters at Coosawhatchie, the point most threatened, and directed defences to be erected opposite Hilton Head and on the Broad and Salcatchie to cover Savannah. These were the points requiring immediate attention. He superintended in person the works overlooking the approach to the railroad from Port Royal, and soon infused into his troops a part of his own energy. The works he had planned rose with magical rapidity. A few days after his arrival at Coosawhatchie, Dupont and Sherman sent their first reconnoissance in that direction, which was met and repulsed by shot from the newly-erected batteries; and now, whether the Federals advanced toward the railroad or turned in the direction of Charleston or Savannah, they were arrested by the Confederate batteries. The people, seeing the Federals repulsed at every point, regained their confidence, and with it their energy.

We may, at this point, introduce a letter addressed to two of his daughters shortly after his journey South, as it gives, in his own words, his opinion of the preceding state of the coast defences, together with some interesting matter relating to his home life:

“SAVANNAH, 22 Nov., 1861.

“MY DARLING DAUGHTERS: I wish I could see you, be with you, and never again part from you. God only can give me that happiness. I pray for it night and day. But my prayers, I know, are not worthy to be heard. . . . I am much pleased at your description of Stratford and your visit there. It is endeared to me by many recollections, and it has always been the desire of my life to be able to purchase it. Now that we have no other home, and the one we so loved has been for ever desecrated, that desire is stronger with me than ever. The horse-chestnut you mention in the garden was planted by my mother. I am sorry the vault is so dilapidated. You do not mention the spring, one of the objects of my earliest recollections. How my heart goes back to those happy days! . . . This is my second visit to Savannah. I have been down the coast as far as Amelia Island to examine the defences. They are poor indeed, and I have laid off work to employ our people a month.

I hope our enemy will be polite enough to wait for us. It is difficult to get our people to realize their position. . . .

“Your devoted father,

“R. E. LEE.”

The most important points being now secured against immediate attack, the general proceeded to organize a system of sea-coast defence different from that which had previously been adopted. He withdrew the troops and material from those works which had been established on the islands and salient points, which he could not defend, to a strong interior line, where the effect of the Federal naval force would be neutralized. After a careful reconnoissance of the coast he designated such points as he considered it necessary to fortify. The most important positions on this extensive line were Georgetown, Charleston, Pocotaligo, Coosawhatchie, and Savannah. Coosawhatchie, being central, could communicate with either Charleston or Savannah in two or three hours by railroad, so in case of an attack they could support each other. The positions between Coosawhatchie and Savannah, and those between Charleston and Coosawhatchie, could be reinforced from the positions contiguous to them. There was thus a defensive relation throughout the entire line.

At this time there was great want of guns suitable for sea-coast defence. Those in use had been on the coast for more than thirty years, and were of too light a calibre to cope with the powerful ordnance that had been introduced into the Federal navy. It was therefore desirable to arm the batteries now constructed with heavy guns. The ordnance department being prepared to cast guns of the heaviest calibre, requisitions were made for eight- and ten-inch columbiads for the batteries bordering on the channels that would be entered by gunboats. The heavy smooth-bore guns were preferred to the rifle cannons for fixed batteries, as experiments had shown that the crushing effect of the solid round shot was more destructive than the small breach and deeper penetration of the rifle-bolts. The difference of range was not important, as beyond a certain distance the aim could not be accurate. By the last of December

many batteries had been completed and other works were being rapidly constructed. When the new year of 1862 opened there was a greater feeling of security among the people of South Carolina and Georgia than had been felt for several months.

The information received from every quarter led to the belief that the Federal Government was making preparations for a powerful attack upon either Charleston or Savannah. In anticipation of this attack every effort was made to strengthen these places. General Ripley, who commanded at Charleston, and General Lawton, the commander at Savannah, ably seconded Lee in the execution of his plans, while Generals Evans, Drayton, and Mercer assisted him at other points. The ordnance department, under the direction of its energetic chief, Colonel Gorgas, filled with wonderful promptitude the various demands made upon it. This greatly facilitated the completion of the defences.

The Federal troops on Beaufort Island were inactive during the months of December, January, and February, and the fleet was in the offing blockading Charleston and Savannah. About the 1st of March the Federal gunboats entered the Savannah River by way of the channel leading from Hilton Head. The small Confederate fleet was too weak to engage them, so they retained undisputed possession of the river. They then established batteries to intercept the communication between Fort Pulaski and the city of Savannah. This fort commands the entrance to the Savannah River, twelve miles below the city.

A few days after getting possession of the river the Federals landed a force under General Q. A. Gillmore on the opposite side of the fort. General Gillmore, having completed his batteries, opened fire about the 1st of April. Having no hope of succor, Fort Pulaski, after striking a blow for honor, surrendered with about 500 men.

The house at Coosawhatchie selected by General Lee for headquarters was of just sufficient capacity for himself and military family, which consisted of Captain Thornton Washington, adjutant-general, Captains Walter H. Taylor and Manigault, aides-de-camp, Captain Ives, engineer officer, Captain Walker, cavalry officer, and Major A. L. Long, chief of artil-

lery. Though not habitually present, may be added Captain Stephen Elliot, whose perfect knowledge of the coast enabled him to render the most valuable service. The general was as unpretending in the interior arrangement of his quarters as were his exterior surroundings. His simple camp-equipage and that of his staff comprised the entire furniture of the house. The table-service consisted of a neat set of tin-ware, plates, dishes, and cups made to fit into each other for convenience in packing. The bill of fare corresponded in frugality to the plainness of the furniture. The general occupied the head of his table, and always seasoned the meal with his good-humor and pleasant jests, often at the expense of some member of the staff who seemed to miss the luxuries of the table more than himself.

The extensive line of operations that demanded his attention caused Lee to be almost constantly on the move, first at one place, and then at another, where important work was in progress. It was remarkable how his quiet, confident manner stimulated the men to exertion whenever he came among them. On these occasions he more forcibly impressed one with the magnetic influence of the power of genius over inferiors than in any man the writer of this memoir ever saw.

When inspecting the defences of Charleston harbor the mind of the writer naturally was carried back to the time of his first acquaintance with Fort Moultrie. At that time the political harmony of the country was agitated by a ripple of discontent which was soon dispelled, and Charleston was permitted ten years of uninterrupted prosperity. Then she stood in her wealth, beauty, and commercial importance queen among the cities of the Southern Atlantic. Now war had closed her spacious harbor and the flames had consumed her wealth and destroyed her beauty. Though oppressed by misfortune, she still proudly bore her crest, determined to preserve her honor untarnished to the close of her existence.

It was only necessary to perfect the defences on James and John's Islands to entirely secure Charleston from attack seaward. This being done, this city was enabled, with the skill of the engineer and the bravery of the troops under the direc-

tion of Generals G. T. Beauregard, Sam Jones, and others, to sustain, considering the power of the engines brought against her, one of the most remarkable sieges on record.

About the middle of March, Lee was directed to proceed to Richmond. By that time he had established a strong interior line of defence extending from Winyaw Bay to the mouth of St. Mary's River. This line, being bravely and skilfully defended, proved to be an impenetrable barrier to the combined efforts of the land and naval forces of the enemy constantly employed on the coast, until it was carried by Sherman in his unopposed march through Georgia and South Carolina. In order that the importance of this series of defensive works may be understood, it is necessary to know what it accomplished. It protected the most valuable agricultural section of the Confederacy, ensured the safety of Charleston and Savannah, and covered the principal line of communication between the Mississippi and the Potomac. Besides these important results it produced a desirable effect by diffusing among the inhabitants a sense of security they had not felt for many months.

When Lee took his departure the command devolved upon General Pemberton, a brave and experienced officer. He was well acquainted with the plan of operation adopted, and was therefore able to advance successfully the works that necessarily remained incomplete. Major Long remained on duty with Pemberton until May, when he received orders to report to General Lee in Richmond. At that time a general depression was felt throughout the Confederacy, caused by the results following the battle of Shiloh, the death of General Albert Sidney Johnston, the fall of New Orleans, and the tremendous losses occasioned by the evacuation of Yorktown and Norfolk.

The Southern campaign of General Lee which we have just described presents a remarkable example of a successful opposition of science and art to mere physical power. With surprising strategic ability he selected the important points of a long and difficult line, and with equal tactical skill adopted measures for their defence. The infantry was disposed for mutual support, while the artillery, in groups of a few guns,



was placed in batteries at intervals, so as to cover extensive districts, and at the same time to be able to bring a heavy concentric fire on intermediate points. This combination was the most effective that could have been devised to prevent the incursion of gunboats.

We may also observe that there is a striking contrast between the vigor and energy displayed on the one side and the supineness manifested on the other. The Federal commander, instead of making after his easy capture of Port Royal a rapid movement toward the railroad at Pocotaligo and Charleston by the Edisto, or toward Savannah by way of Hilton Head—in either of which movements he would at that time have met with little or no opposition—contented himself with gathering the harvest of cotton found on Beaufort Island and providing a refuge for the fugitive slaves from the neighboring plantations; thus giving a petty financial enterprise and a negro sentimentality precedence over military operations of the highest importance; while his active opponent erected, unmolested, an insurmountable barrier to his future advance.

## CHAPTER IX.

### *THE PENINSULAR CAMPAIGN.*

The Defences of the Peninsula.—Cruise of the Merrimac.—Siege of Yorktown by McClellan's Army.—General Johnston's Plan of Operations.—It is not Accepted.—Retreat of the Confederate Army.—Battle of Williamsburg.—Surrender of Norfolk.—The Federal Fleet Repulsed.—Battle of Seven Pines.—General Lee takes Command.

**B**EFORE proceeding with this narrative it may be well to review previous operations, especially those that had taken place on the Peninsula and about Norfolk. To gain a clear idea of them a description of the peninsula embraced by the York and James rivers, Hampton Roads, and Chesapeake Bay is necessary. Its principal natural features are—the Chickahominy, a stream of considerable length; the Warwick, an estuary of the James which rises in the neighborhood of Yorktown; and the primeval forest, interspersed with farms and plantations. Its surface is generally level, except along the Chickahominy and the James, where it is diversified by low ranges of hills. The strip between the Warwick and Hampton Roads is marshy and easily inundated. Old Point, Hampton Roads, Yorktown, Williamsburg, Newport News, and Sewell's Point are also included in its topography. Norfolk, situated on the Elizabeth River a few miles from its junction with Hampton Roads, is surrounded by a flat, sandy country, bordered on the south by the Dismal Swamp, and terminated on the north and east by Hampton Roads and Chesapeake Bay. The town of Portsmouth and Gosport navy-yard lie on the Elizabeth River, directly opposite.

The first act of the governor of Virginia upon the secession of the State was to seize the Gosport navy-yard and provide for the security of the James and York rivers. This measure was of the highest importance, as the safety of the capital and

of an important portion of the State depended on their security. The vessels of war captured in Norfolk harbor and the immense quantity of naval stores found at the navy-yard were of incalculable value to the Confederacy. The defences of Norfolk and the mouth of the James River were assigned to General Huger, while those of Yorktown and the Peninsula were entrusted to General Magruder. These officers had obtained high distinction in the United States army, and the zeal and energy they exhibited in the new work to which they had been assigned fully entitled them to the highest confidence of the Confederacy.

The Federals, at the same time, were also active in their preparations on the Peninsula. General Butler appeared almost simultaneously with Huger and Magruder at the head of large forces, for the double purpose of defending Fortress Monroe from Confederate attack and of operating either against Norfolk or Yorktown as circumstances might suggest. On the 8th of June, 1861, Butler sent a strong reconnoitering party toward Yorktown. This force was met at Big Bethel Church, a few miles from the village of Hampton, by Colonel D. H. Hill, with a detachment of infantry, supported by Colonel G. W. Randolph's battalion of artillery, and was repulsed with heavy loss. This was the first conflict of arms since the fall of Fort Sumter, and, although small in point of numbers, its moral effect was considerable by inspiring the Confederates with confidence, while it had a depressing influence upon the Federals.

After this affair the Federals made no other demonstration on the Peninsula until the ensuing spring. During the interim Magruder and Huger applied themselves with skill and industry to the completion of the defences of their respective positions, while the naval department was active in its preparations at the Gosport navy-yard. Magruder first occupied himself in securing the command of the York River by the erection of strong batteries at Yorktown and Gloucester Point, where the river is less than a mile wide; then he completed his land-defences to the Warwick near its head, subsequently extending them down that river to its mouth. The strip of land between the Warwick and the James, being marshy, could be easily

rendered difficult, if not impracticable, for military movements by inundation, for which purpose dams had been built on the Warwick. General Huger, on his part, protected Norfolk on the land side by a system of defences extending from the Dismal Swamp to the Elizabeth River, and secured that river and the mouth of the James by strong batteries, the most important of which were those on Crany Island and Sewell's Point. Being connected by a part of the James, the works of Magruder and Huger formed a continuous defensive line from the Dismal Swamp to Yorktown, of such strength that its reduction could only be accomplished by the tedious process of a siege, and could be turned only on the right by way of Albemarle Sound, and on the left by the Rappahannock River. In either case, through their possession of an interior line, the Confederates could have easily anticipated such a movement. Referring to the part of this line traversing the Peninsula, General Magruder says:

"Deeming it of vital importance to hold Yorktown on the York River, and Mulberry Island on the James River, and to keep the enemy in check by an intervening line until the authorities might take such steps as should be held necessary to meet a serious advance of the enemy in the Peninsula, I felt compelled to dispose my forces in such a manner as to accomplish these objects with the least possible risk under the circumstances of great hazard which surrounded the little army I commanded. I had prepared, as my real line of defence, positions in advance at Harwood's and Young's mills. Both flanks of this line were defended by boggy and difficult streams and swamps. In addition, the left flank, reaching to the York River, was defended by elaborate fortifications at Ship's Point, connected by a broken line of redoubts crossing the heads of the various ravines which empty into the York River and Wormley's Creek, and terminating at Fort Grafton nearly in front of Yorktown. The right flank was defended by the fortifications at the mouth of the Warwick River and at Mulberry Island Point, and the redoubts extending from the Warwick to the James River. Intervening between the two hills was a wooded country about two miles in extent. This wooded line,

forming the centre, needed the defence of infantry in sufficient force to prevent any attempt on the part of the enemy to break through it. In my opinion, this advanced line with its flank defences might have been held by 20,000 troops. With 25,000 I do not believe it could have been broken by any force the enemy could have brought against it."

On examining the theatre of operations embracing Norfolk and Yorktown, it will be observed that those places bear a defensive relation to each other, so that the fall of one would necessarily involve the evacuation or capture of the other. While the military authorities at Washington were discussing the several lines of operation of which Richmond was the objective point, that by way of Norfolk was suggested; but as the Peninsula presented not only a shorter line, but also fewer difficulties than the Norfolk one, it was adopted as the field of operation. McClellan in answer to the question, "During the early part of last winter could not a force of 30,000 or 40,000 men have been concentrated suddenly at Fortress Monroe, and Norfolk captured and the Merrimac destroyed without incurring any great hazard to us?" said, "Such a thing was possible, but would have been difficult, and I do not think it would have promoted the general objects of the war. I looked upon the fall of Norfolk as a necessary consequence of a movement upon Richmond." Question: "Would not the destruction of the Merrimac have been a great point gained, and have rendered the move upon Richmond, by way of the James or York River, very much more safe?" Answer: "As things turned out, yes. But I do not think the importance of the Merrimac was appreciated until she came out. I remember very well that the Navy Department thought that the Congress and the Cumberland were capable of taking care of the Merrimac. The question of taking Norfolk after the Merrimac made its appearance and destroyed the Congress and Cumberland was seriously discussed. The conclusion arrived at was, that it was better not to depart from the direct movement upon Richmond under all the circumstances of the case." \*

\* See "McClellan's Testimony before the Congressional Committee on the Conduct of the War," vol. i. p. 425.

By the 1st of March, 1862, the famous iron-clad Merrimac was ready for service, and other vessels of similar character were rapidly approaching completion. The Merrimac on the 8th of March made her first cruise, in which she encountered a part of the Federal fleet in Hampton Roads and destroyed two first-class frigates. On the 9th she attacked the Monitor, the especial boast of the Federals, and, while inflicting considerable damage on this antagonist, sustained herself but little injury. The Confederate authorities at this time believed that with the Merrimac and the other vessels of war, when completed, the tide-water section of Virginia would be secure, both by land and water, against the attack of the land and naval forces of the enemy.

We will now turn our attention to the operations on the Potomac. After the battle of Manassas, General Johnston continued to direct military affairs on the Potomac and in the Shenandoah Valley. There were, however, no operations of a general character during the fall and winter. The occupation of Centreville, the defeat of the Federals at Ball's Bluff by General Evans, and the expedition against Romney led by General T. J. Jackson were the principal events that occurred during that period.

The main body of the army went into winter quarters at Centreville, and that position was strongly fortified. The proximity of General Johnston was looked upon with an anxious eye at Washington, where his force was exaggerated to more than double its real strength.

When General McClellan entered upon the defence of the Federal capital, about the end of July, 1861, he found himself surrounded with difficulties of no ordinary character. The army which afterward became so distinguished as the Army of the Potomac consisted of about 50,000 men, mostly fugitives from the late field of Manassas who had returned to their colors. McClellan was therefore obliged to shoulder at once the onerous task of reorganizing, recruiting, and disciplining the army while at the same time he provided for the completion of the exterior defences of the city. In each of these duties he displayed great administrative abilities. He also manifested in

the course of his labors much firmness and self-control in resisting newspaper taunts and the impatience of the Federal authorities, which urged him to the field before his arrangements were complete. He could not, however, be turned from his purpose of perfecting his army and the defences of Washington in all their details before he advanced. This, through patient labor, he accomplished by the opening of spring, 1862, when he was in condition to leave Washington in security and enter the field at the head of an army of 150,000 men, perfect in all its appointments, in addition to a large reserve force organized for the defence of the capital during his absence.

Though Johnston's force did not then much exceed 40,000 men, the Federal mind was still deluded with the belief that it was much greater, and McClellan was confident that he would have to encounter at Centreville and Manassas a force of at least 80,000 men strongly intrenched. General Johnston, perceiving that this delusion would be speedily dissipated by a collision with an army numerically four times greater than his own, prepared to evacuate Centreville and Manassas at the moment McClellan should commence his advance. This looked-for event occurred on the 8th of March, 1862, whereupon Johnston retired behind the Rappahannock.

General McClellan, on finding Centreville and Manassas evacuated and the railroad bridge over the Rappahannock destroyed, prepared for an immediate transfer of his army to the Peninsula by way of the Potomac. The greater part of his army having arrived, he appeared in front of Magruder on the 4th of April with the main body of his forces, accompanied by a powerful siege-train of Parrot guns and mortars.

Before his arrival at this locality McClellan was ignorant of the defences on the Warwick, and had been misled by his map in regard to the topography of the contiguous country; therefore he made a careful personal examination of the works on the Warwick previous to deciding on a plan of attack. His reconnoissance convinced him that Magruder's position could not be carried by assault, and he determined to reduce it by regular approaches. For that purpose he promptly commenced

the erection of his primary batteries beyond the effective range of Magruder's guns—one and a half miles.

The Peninsula having become the principal theatre of war in Virginia, and Magruder's force, of less than 11,000 strong, being now inadequate for its defence, General Johnston was directed to send thither all his available troops and assume in person the command of that important field of operation. By the 20th of April all of the designated reinforcements had arrived. We shall here give a brief summary of the opposing armies:

The Federals had on the Peninsula, under the immediate command of General McClellan, 115,000 men; in the Valley and on the line of the Orange and Alexandria Railroad, 30,000 men, commanded by Generals Banks and Shields; and on the Potomac, a reserve of 40,000, under General McDowell—making an aggregate of 185,000 men.

Opposed to this force the Confederates had on the Peninsula 53,000 men, under the immediate command of General Johnston, with Ewell and Jackson on the upper Rappahannock; in the Valley, something over 16,000 men; and 18,000 at Norfolk, commanded by Huger—making a total of 90,000 men. These numbers will not differ materially from the statements given by the opposing generals. There was also a small local force at Richmond, and a much larger one of a similar character in and about Washington. Besides the Federal land-forces there was a powerful naval force in Hampton Roads, opposed by a small Confederate one in Norfolk harbor, consisting of the *Merrimac* and a few river gunboats.

At this time General J. E. Johnston bore the highest military reputation in the Confederacy, since by his manœuvring with Patterson in the Valley, his splendid success at Manassas, and his masterly retreat from Centreville he had acquired a world-wide renown. Before entering upon his new command he presented to the President a plan of operations entirely different from that which had been previously adopted. It, however, involved the risk of such great sacrifices that it was disapproved of by Mr. Davis and his military advisers, General Randolph, Secretary of War, and General Lee.



Johnston, regarding Magruder's line on the Peninsula indefensible, thus explains his plan: "Instead of only delaying the Federal army in its approach, I proposed that it should be encountered in front of Richmond by one quite as numerous, formed by uniting there all the available forces of the Confederacy in North Carolina, South Carolina, and Georgia, with those at Norfolk, those on the Peninsula, and those near Richmond, including Smith's and Longstreet's divisions, which had recently arrived. The great army thus formed, surprising that of the United States by an attack when it was expecting to besiege Richmond, would be almost certain to win; and the enemy, defeated a hundred miles from Fort Monroe, their place of refuge, could scarcely escape destruction. Such a victory would decide not only the campaign, but the war, while the present plan could produce no decisive results.

"The President, who had listened with apparent interest, replied that the question was so important that he would hear it fully discussed before making his decision, and desired the writer of this work [General Johnston] to meet General Randolph (Secretary of War) and General Lee in his office at an appointed time for the purpose: upon advice, Mr. Davis authorized the invitation of Major-generals Smith and Longstreet to the conference."

In the mean time General Johnston proceeded to Yorktown, and after a personal examination of Magruder's position returned to Richmond with his opinion in regard to its strength unchanged. General Johnston continues: "The conference began more than an hour before noon by my describing, at the President's request, General Magruder's defensive arrangements, as I had previously done to him, and representing that General McClellan's probable design of molesting our batteries at Gloucester Point and Yorktown, and turning our position by transporting his army up the river, could not be prevented, so that the adoption of a new plan was necessary. . . .

"In the discussion that followed General Randolph, who had been a naval officer, objected to the plan proposed because it included at least the temporary abandonment of Norfolk, which would involve the probable loss of the materials for

many vessels of war contained in the navy-yard there. Lee opposed it because he thought that the withdrawal from South Carolina and Georgia of any considerable number of troops would expose the important seaports of Charleston and Savannah to the danger of capture. He thought, too, that the Peninsula had excellent fields of battle for a small army contending with a great one, and that we should for that reason make the contest with McClellan's army there. Longstreet, owing to his deafness, took little part in the conference.

"The writer of these pages maintained that all to be accomplished, by any success attainable on the Peninsula, would be to delay the enemy two or three weeks in his march to Richmond, for the reasons already given, and that success would soon give us back everything temporarily abandoned to achieve it, and would be decisive of the war as well as of the campaign.

"The President decided in favor of the opinion of General Lee, and ordered General Johnston to take command of the Army of the Peninsula, adding the departments of Norfolk and the Peninsula to that of Northern Virginia."\*

General Johnston further relates: "I assumed my new command on the 17th. The arrival of Smith's and Longstreet's divisions had increased the army on the Peninsula to about 53,000 men, including 3000 sick. It was opposed to 133,000 Federal soldiers. Magruder's division formed the Confederate right, Longstreet's the centre, D. H. Hill's the left, and Smith's the reserve. The field-works at Gloucester Point and Yorktown on the left flank, and Mulberry Point on the right, were occupied by 8000 men. In this position we had nothing to do but to finish the works begun between Yorktown and the head of the inundations, and observe the enemy's operations. They were limited to a little skirmishing at long range and daily cannonading, generally directed at Magruder's left or Longstreet's right, and the construction of a long line of batteries in front of Yorktown and beyond the range of our old-fashioned ship-guns. These batteries, our scouts reported, were of about one hundred of the heaviest Parrot guns and above thirty mortars. A battery on the shore three miles (pilot's

\* See Johnston's *Narrative of Military Operations*, pp. 113-116.

distance) below Yorktown received the first guns mounted. Shots of the first volley, fired to get the range of the Confederate works, fell in the camp of the reserve, a mile and a half beyond the village. . . . Finding on the 27th that the Federal batteries would be ready for action in five or six days, the War Department was informed of the fact, and of the intention to abandon Yorktown and the Warwick before the fire of that artillery should be opened upon our troops. The suggestion made in the conference in the President's office was also repeated—to form a powerful army near Richmond of all the available forces of the Confederacy, and to fall upon McClellan's army when it should come within reach. Major-general Huger was instructed at the same time to prepare to evacuate Norfolk, and Captain S. S. Lee, commanding the navy-yard at Gosport, to remove to a place of safety as much of the valuable property it contained as he could."

Learning that the Federal batteries would be ready for action on the 4th of May, General Johnston evacuated Yorktown and its defences on the night of the 3d, and retired with his whole army toward Richmond. Since Magruder's position was never put to the test, the difference of opinion respecting it must be reconciled by speculative criticism. The next morning McClellan found himself again baffled by his wily antagonist, and saw the batteries he had so carefully constructed doomed to silence. General McClellan on the morning of the 4th of May took possession of Yorktown and instituted a vigorous pursuit of Johnston's retreating columns.

The rear-guard, under Longstreet, being overtaken at Williamsburg, was compelled to halt and offer battle to check the rapid advance of the enemy. General Johnston was also obliged to turn back D. H. Hill's division to support his rear-guard. The greater part of the forenoon of the 5th was occupied in skirmishing, but in the afternoon a spirited combat ensued between the Confederate rear-guard under General Longstreet and the Federal advance under General Sumner, which continued until terminated by night.

In this affair Hill and Early on the part of the Confederates, and Hooker, Hancock, and Kearny on that of the Federals,

were conspicuously prominent. Both sides claimed the victory, but the result was that Johnston gained the time he required to extricate his trains, which had been retarded by the bad condition of the roads, while the Federals were left masters of the field by the withdrawal of the Confederate rear-guard. Without any other interruption worthy of note Johnston continued his retreat to the Chickahominy.

The movements here described were immediately followed by the surrender of Norfolk in accordance with the suggestion of General Johnston. Though the yielding of this important place with its highly valuable navy-yard was strongly opposed by members of the Cabinet at Richmond, yet the impossibility of holding it after the retreat of the army from the Peninsula became evident, and it was ordered to be abandoned. In accordance therewith, General Huger destroyed the dockyards and removed the stores, and on the 10th of May evacuated the place, withdrawing its garrison to Richmond. On the next day a Federal force from Fortress Monroe, under the command of General Wool, occupied the town.

Hopes were entertained of saving the Merrimac, a vessel which had done such noble service for the Confederacy, and caused such serious disaster to the Federal navy. But it was quickly perceived that its draught of water was too great to permit it to ascend the James River to Richmond, and there was no alternative but its destruction. It was therefore blown up by order of its commander, Commodore Tatnall.

The inevitable result of the loss of the Merrimac was the opening of the James River to the Federal gunboats, which was at once taken advantage of by a fleet composed of the Monitor, Galena, Aroostook, Port Royal, and Naugatuck, under Commodore Rogers. This fleet ascended the stream to within twelve miles of Richmond, where it was arrested by the fire of Fort Darling on Drewry's Bluff. A four hours' engagement took place, which resulted in the withdrawal of the fleet, considerably the worse for the vigorous play of the Confederate battery.

Yet, despite this check to the approach to Richmond by water through the repulse of a strong fleet of gunboats by a fortifica-